

GUIDE: FIRE RATED CABINETS

When it comes to the storage of flammable liquids, the UK has a minimum requirement, regulated by the HSE (Health & Safety Executive). The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR) set the minimum requirements for the protection of workers from:



Fire and explosion risks related to dangerous substances



Potentially explosive atmospheres



Gases under pressure



Substances corrosive to metals

DSEAR requires employers to control the risks to the safety of employees and others from these hazards.

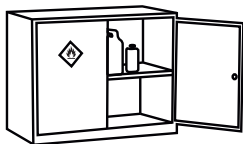


Fire resisting cabinets, cupboards or bins should provide a minimum of 30 minutes resistance except where explosion relief provisions are made.



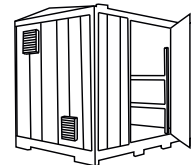
The 30 minute standard is the minimum requirement under UK regulations but for quantities of flammables above recommended maximum, you may find cabinets with enhanced fire performance help when making your risk assessment demonstration.

Do you need:



Cabinets with enhanced fire performance

or



Dedicated storage rooms and outdoor storage area

It is of course, your responsibility to ensure that cabinets manufactured to any particular standard or design specification meet the minimum legal requirements.

Equally, the use of cabinets with enhanced fire performance should not be seen as a substitute for the provision of dedicated storage rooms and outdoor storage areas for containers which are empty or are not needed at that moment.

The DSEAR Regulations 2002 states:

“It is recommended that the maximum quantities that may be stored in cabinets and bins are no more than 50 litres for extremely, highly flammable and those flammable liquids with a flashpoint below the maximum ambient temperature of the working area; and no more than 250 litres for other flammable liquids with a higher flashpoint of up to 55°C.”

GUIDE: FIRE RATED CABINETS

These quantities are intended to be viewed as recommendations representing good industry safe practice, rather than be taken as absolute limits. There is intended to be some flexibility with these limits, as the design of modern day buildings and the pattern of work can sometimes make adherence to these quantities difficult to achieve.

However, when you need to store quantities above the recommendation, a robust demonstration of this requirement would need to be made. The risk assessment should take into account:



The properties of the materials to be stored or handled in the working area. For mixed storage the worst case situation should be applied, i.e. all materials in the storage cupboard or bin should be considered as being the same material as the one that has the lowest flashpoint.



The size of the working area and the number of people working in it.



The amount of flammable liquids being handled in the working area and the quantities of liquid that may be accidentally released or spilled ignition sources and potential fire spread in the event of an ignition exhaust ventilation provision to the working area and/or the storage cupboard or bin.



The fire performance of the storage cupboard or bin.



The arrangements for closing the cupboard or bin doors/lid in the event of a fire and the means of escape from the workroom / working area.

Cabinets manufactured to the European standard BS EN 14470-1:2004 should be given consideration as they offer fire protection of up to 90 minutes. This additional time can help protect lives and property and buy time for site responders and/or the local authority fire brigade to attend and deal with an incident.

PLEASE REMEMBER!

Whatever you decide, we recommend that you consult with your insurance provider before making any purchase, as they will have a vested interest.